

CEPPS/IRI Quarterly Report: April - June 2005

COUNTRY: Kyrgyz Republic
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I. SUMMARY

The third quarter of FY 2005 was dominated by the aftermath of the March unrest that led to President Akaev's departure from the country and subsequent resignation, the establishment of an interim government, the scheduling of an early presidential election by the new Jogorku Kenesh (Kenesh), the sitting of a 114-member Constitutional Council, and preparation for the pre-term presidential election in July. By the end of the quarter, several parliamentary races were still in dispute, with some of the constituencies unrepresented in the Kenesh.

Former president Askar Akaev officially resigned on April 4, after a parliamentary delegation visited him in Moscow. This occurred against the backdrop of the formation of an interim government, led by Kurmanbek Bakiev acting as both president and prime minister. Ar Namys Party leader Feliks Kulov announced his candidacy for the president on April 25, but withdrew in May when he and Bakiev worked out a power-sharing agreement based on Bakiev's probable victory in the July presidential election. Also in April, the Kenesh confirmed the Constitutional Council, chaired by Kenesh Speaker Omurbek Tekebaev. The Constitutional Council's mission is to recommend constitutional reforms.

In April, IRI contracted a local firm to conduct field interviews with 1,500 Kyrgyzstani voters to survey their opinions on important issues, attitudes toward voting and democracy, and their opinions of the leading candidates for president.

May was a relatively quiet month of candidate registration and preparation. During May, IRI presented its polling results to presidential campaign staffs, political parties, international NGOs, and the U.S. embassy. The presentations to the campaign staffs were immediately followed by IRI trainings on how to use the poll results for developing campaign messages. To help candidates' staffs prepare for the campaign period, IRI closed out its pre-election campaign period trainings with instruction on door-to-door (DTD) campaigning. The trainings were conducted in eight cities throughout the country.

In the final days of May, a U.S. senatorial delegation visited Bishkek for one full day of meetings with selected candidates, the OSCE, U.S. democracy NGOs, and the U.S. ambassador and embassy staff. The purpose of the one-day visit was to assess campaign conditions and encourage the CEC to run clean elections. Senator Lindsey Graham summarized the delegation's mission in his statement to the press at the Media Development Center (Freedom House press) when he stated that what the U.S. is "hoping for is that the institutions change, that freedom of the press would be permanent, that a legal system will be formed that takes care of people, not politicians..."

In early June, IRI provided candidate public speaking and debate training. By this time, nine candidates remained in the race, and only two candidates took advantage of the training.

The campaign period officially began on June 14 with seven registered candidates. One candidate soon dropped out, leaving six in the race. On June 17, the campaign environment was temporarily shaken up by troubles surrounding candidate Baryktabasov's non-registration with the CEC on citizenship grounds. His supporters stormed the "White House" in Bishkek, but were then forced out by the militia. The dominant themes of the candidates' campaigns were law and order (stability), the economy, fighting corruption, and the handling of the March 24 mass protests and their aftermath.

In late June, IRI trained 465 candidate observers and precinct election commission (PEC) members with advisory vote in eight cities on their rights and responsibilities at the polls on election day. (An additional 66 observers and PEC members were trained on July 1 and 2 in Talas and Jalal-abad.)

In this highly-charged environment, IRI continued to monitor election-related developments by attending various campaign events and election assistance coordination meetings, as detailed in *Other Activity* below.

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The activities in this report were funded by IRI's two-year CEPPS II agreement and by a shorter supplemental award for presidential election assistance. Technical assistance in the third quarter included on the following activities:

- national public opinion poll (funded under original CEPPS agreement)
- poll-based message development training (funded under original CEPPS agreement)
- train-the-trainer instruction DTD campaigning (supplemental award)
- debate and public speaking training (supplemental award)
- candidate observer training (funded under original CEPPS agreement)
- election observation mission (EOM) (supplemental award)

National Opinion Poll

IRI conducted the first large-scale, nationwide national opinion survey in the Kyrgyz Republic. The poll was conducted April 15-25 using a representative sample of 1,500 Kyrgyz residents aged 18 years and older. The poll's main conclusions are detailed in the attached *Poll Executive Summary*. In brief, the poll results showed:

- Respondents considered unemployment, the economy, and fighting corruption the most important issues in the country. Voters have high expectations that the next president will be able to solve these problems.
- Political parties are perceived in a rather positive light and are considered to be a necessary element of the political system.
- Respondents were disappointed with the last parliamentary elections because they were generally perceived to be unfair.
- Respondents expected the forthcoming presidential elections to be significantly more free and fair.
- The population trusts two Kyrgyz politicians more than others: Feliks Kulov, who is popular in the north of the country, and Kurmanbek Bakiev, who received highest ratings in the south.
- Russia is perceived as the country's main partner, while China is seen as the most likely threat.
- The poll results showed that Kyrgyz society is very tolerant of religious and ethnic minorities, and there seem to be no objective factors that could lead to ethnic or religious conflicts.
- In general, all social groups in the Kyrgyz Republic expressed similar opinions about the political situation and the future of the country. The most significant differences in opinions occurred between people living in the more prosperous north and poorer south. Thus, standard of living, urban-rural division, and self-identification as northerner or southerner (to some extent related to family networks or clan ties) are the main discriminating factors in determining political preferences.

Beginning May 19, IRI presented the poll results separately to selected audiences, including the U.S. Ambassador, USAID, U.S. democracy NGOs, the OSCE, the Japanese Development Agency, the Association of Rural Villages and Towns, political parties (Alga Kyrgyzstan, Moya Strana, Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK)), and presidential campaigns (Nazaraliev, Kulov, Aitikeev, Akmataliev, Bakiev (three of whom subsequently withdrew from the race)). Moya Strana, SDPK, and Bakiev's Bishkek and Chui region campaign offices received poll-based message development training immediately after their respective poll presentations. The follow-on training was used to show campaigns and candidates how to develop issue-based campaign messages based on the poll results.

Pre-election training

To help candidates prepare for the presidential election, IRI offered poll-based message development training, door-to-door (DTD) training, and observer training for candidate representatives and PEC members with advisory vote. These trainings were

designed to help promote a more competitive political process (LLR 2.1.3.1), generally help strengthen democratic culture among citizens (SO 2.1) by encouraging candidates to view the electorate in an appropriate way, and encourage opportunities for citizen participation (IR 2.1.3) in the PECs.

Message Development Training

Following the presentation of the poll results, IRI conducted a three-hour training seminar on poll-based message development. In providing poll-based message development training, IRI helped strengthen democratic culture among citizens and targeted institutions (S.O.1) by giving campaign staffs important information about attitudes in their country and then providing them with skills to craft those issues into their candidate's message. Election campaign messages need to reflect the everyday reality of citizens' lives in order for a more representative government to take form; otherwise, messages are developed by a small group of disconnected people, resulting in a disconnected message. In order to help campaign staffs assess what voters want, participants also received instruction in how to conduct focus groups.

Poll-based message development training also contributed to creating a more competitive political process (LLR 2.1.3.1) by helping campaign staff and candidates understand that candidates must compete for voters on the basis of their proposals for managing priority national issues. Their success in crafting a message will in part determine whether their candidate convinces enough voters to vote for him/her.

The trainer was IRI Resident Country Director in Ukraine, Chris Holzen, who has conducted similar trainings in several CIS countries. Training themes included:

- strategy of message development
- building blocks of message development
- know yourself; know your opponent; know the political climate; know the demographics; build the message on reality and values
- testing your message: include a value, cite an idea from candidate's platform, and indicate a problem to be solved; talk about unique qualities of the candidate; provide a contrast to the opponent
- communicating the message.

Separate training sessions were held for Moya Strana, SDPK, campaign staff of Kurmanbek Bakiev from Bishkek and Chui region, and campaign staff of candidate Japar Jeksheev. Participants totaled 39, of which 30 were male and eight were women.

The combined poll results presentation and message development training provided political parties and candidate staffs with access to the latest polling data then instructed them on how to use the data to build their candidate's message based on nationwide issues. The training helped participants see beyond past prejudices (north-south) and instead focus on issues cited in the poll. Initially, the north-south divide was palpable because the two main candidates represented north and south, but in the middle of the training, the two candidates became one team. Nevertheless, regional differences continued to inhibit discussion of problems, and there was a suspicion on the part of

northerners that the southerners did not tell the truth when polled. The training demonstrated that it will be difficult for any candidate to win a majority of votes if he/she does not reach outside his/her region.

The most successful exercise was a grid used to record four sets of adjectives describing the candidate's view of himself, the candidate's view of his opponent, the opponent's view of himself, and the opponent's view of the candidate. This grid, developed with participants' input, was the building block for message development and for testing the message. Participants also learned how to conduct focus groups as a method of research and to find out what voters think about their candidate and his opponent. The trainer from Ukraine was able to use Viktor Yushenko's message as an example of successful message development and then point to the campaign of his opponent for an unsuccessful message.

The training was held just prior to the end of candidate registration. Therefore, the slate of candidates was not set, and jockeying for political position was ongoing. During the five days of the training period, three major candidates dropped out of the race.

Unfortunately, lack of organization on the part of the campaign staffs and parties resulted in few participants and participants who were not responsible for message development in the campaign, but had to pass on what they learned to campaign leadership. This meant that important cross tabulations that had been prepared by the trainer were not used because the participants were not the candidates' strategists. In the case of Kulov's campaign staff, IRI decided not to have the training after the presentation because most of the people left in Kulov's campaign headquarters (after he withdrew his candidacy) were Russian political consultants connected with the Academy of Government Service under the President of the Russian Federation.

Door-to-Door (DTD) Campaigning

DTD campaigning is becoming more popular in the Kyrgyz Republic. It is the most direct form of grass roots campaigning. While there may be some drawbacks to this method in the Kyrgyzstani cultural context, IRI included it as part of its election assistance training plan because it is a key part of the competitive election process that USAID seeks to promote (LLR 2.1.3.1) and the Kyrgyz Republic seeks to institute.

This training was offered as part of USAID's objective to strengthen democratic culture among citizens and targeted institutions. The training helped participants prepare to be a part of a new process in the Kyrgyz Republic that links the candidate and the voter. It also contributed to generating a more competitive political process (LLR 2.1.3.1) by equipping volunteer campaigners with the skills to promote their candidate to the voter.

IRI conducted DTD trainings in the north and south, according to the following schedule:

North:

Bishkek, May 30, 31
 Naryn, June 2, 3
 Karakol, June 5, 6
 Talas, June 9, 10

South:

Batken, May 29, 30
 Osh, June 1, 2
 Uzgen, June 4, 5
 Jalal-abad, June 6, 7

Training components included:

- Different forms of campaigning – advantages of DTD
- Selection of DTD campaigners
- Planning a DTD campaign
- DTD techniques
- Practice DTD
- Experiences of Ukraine and the Kyrgyz Republic

Training teams for the north and south consisted of a lead trainer from Ukraine and a Kyrgyz assistant trainer who addressed the cultural factors for DTD in the local context. The Ukraine trainers were Lyuba Maiboroda, a political consultant and a deputy of the Cherkassy oblast council, and Yuri Hromovsky, head of the Cherkassy Regional Office of Rukh of Ukraine Party. The Kyrgyzstani trainers were IRI's program assistant Kanat Joldoshev, who is an experienced trainer, and Makhmud Matniyazov, who has DTD campaign training experience from the parliamentary election.

Participants from the candidates' campaigns and political parties were as follows:

North:

<u>City</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Number trained</u>
Bishkek	Bakiev	28
	Ar Namys Party	16
	Baryktabasov	86
	Dushebaev	1
	Jeksheev	14
Naryn	Bakiev	6
	Ar Namys Party	2
	Baryktabasov	38
	Bakir uulu	31
Talas	Baryktabasov	116
	Jeksheev	2
	Bakir uulu	27
	Ar Namys Party	2
Karakol	Baryktabasov	103
	Jeksheev	7
	Ar Namys Party	4

Total: Bakiev-34; Baryktabasov-343; Jeksheev-23; Ar Namys Party-24; Bakir uulu-58; and Dushebaev-1.

South:

<u>City</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Number trained</u>
Batken	SDPK	1
	Baryktabasov	3
	Bakiev	40
Osh	SDPK	39
	Ar Namys Party	10
Uzgen	Bakiev	56
Jalal-abad	Ar Namys Party	17
	Bakiev	43

Total: Bakiev-139; SDPK-40; Ar Namys Party-27; Baryktabasov-3.

The total of number of candidate and party participants trained were:

Bakiev – 173
 Baryktabasov – 346
 Ar Namys – 51
 Jeksheev – 23
 Bakir uulu – 58
 SDPK – 40
 Dushebaev – 1

Grand Total: 655

Total number of women trained: 247 (38%)

The training teams combined highly experienced trainers from Ukraine, where DTD techniques are more developed, and an assistant trainer from the Kyrgyz Republic, where traditions and distances make DTD challenging. The training was interactive, including a role-play in which participants acted as DTD campaigners and voters and then switched roles. The Ukrainian trainers drew similarities between Ukraine ten years ago and the Kyrgyz Republic today. In both countries, vote-buying is rampant, and people do campaign and election-related work to make money. However, the trainer noted DTD campaigning changes this by attracting committed activists and forces campaigns to focus on other ways of convincing voters. They encouraged participants to get rid of any fear associated with the process and told them that they could be part of a free and fair process by being good door-to-door campaigners.

The training came at a good time for the participants: Kyrgyzstani citizens are more active after the mass protests and change of government in March. As one participant said, “There have been changes in the consciousness of voters in connection with March 24 [protests]. People are more interested in the economic programs of candidates.”

DTD goes against the grain of a major factor in Kyrgyzstani political and social practices: regional and tribal ties. By bringing information to voters’ doorsteps, DTD asks voters to consider candidates independent of these factors, and based more on their

political programs and experience. The DTD technique is also breaking some long-held traditions, such as refusing to enter a house when invited. One participant noted that DTD teams need to be multi-ethnic in some areas of the Kyrgyz Republic. There was also discussion about approaching different age groups while campaigning DTD.

Participants were given a brochure with “do’s” and “don’ts” of DTD and a DVD on DTD campaigning produced by IRI-Lithuania and translated into Kyrgyz. The trainers showed a CD on how to do DTD. There were also handouts on how to break down a neighborhood and plan a DTD strategy. Participants were instructed to spend no more than 2-3 minutes at each house and kindly refuse any offer to enter.

The downside was that the participants did not have a message to deliver from their candidate. Campaign message development is still weak, as is communication between the campaign HQ and regional offices. None of the participants had examples of candidate literature which they would be distributing DTD (this was expected, since the campaign period had not actually begun and the laws are strict about early campaigning). The training emphasized that DTD campaigners must have more than a “vote for candidate X” message to deliver, and the simpler and more concise the message, the better.

The participants of leading candidate Bakiev said they planned to emphasize DTD to avoid accusations that his campaign was using administrative resources. DTD is helpful in combating that charge.

Candidate Public Speaking Training

This training helped further USAID’s objective to strengthen democratic culture among citizens and targeted institutions (SO 2.1) by drilling the participants on the importance of making a connection with the voter. Public speaking and debate training also advanced IRI’s commitment to encourage a more competitive political process (LLR 2.1.3.1). The voting grid (indicating voters’ willingness to vote in general and vote for your candidate) segment of the training helped participants understand to which part of the electorate they should appeal. The grid improved trainees’ ability to find and represent a constituency (LLR 2.1.1.3).

Two candidates (one of whom was subsequently denied registration) participated in separate four-hour training sessions, which consisted of instruction on public speaking, including a training DVD, an exercise in which a real television journalist and the two candidates were filmed doing a mock two-minute interview, and a critique of the candidates’ performance in the mock interview. Trusted agents of five other candidates participated in separate trainings that excluded only the filmed mock interview. The training offered practical tips and practice in speaking, interviewing, and debating and emphasized the importance of issue-oriented connections with the electorate. Participants also watched clips of Kyrgyz politicians discussing issues and critiqued them.

The resident country director of IRI’s Belarus program, Trgvye Olson, conducted the training, accompanied by local television journalist Alexander Kulinski. Mr. Olson

has U.S. political campaign experience. Mr. Kulinski filmed mock interviews for IRI's parliamentary election public speaking training. The training agenda included:

- the main elements of a campaign speech
- defining your message
- making a connection with the audience
- writing a two-minute campaign speech
- reading a speech on camera
- debate format for presidential elections
- debates skills
- staying on message
- practice debate on camera.

Participants included:

Candidates:

Gaisha Ibraimova

Toktaim Umetalieva

Candidate trusted agents

Ibraimova team: 5 people

Umetalieva team: 6 people

Jeksheev team: 4 people

Bakir uulu team: 5 people

Bakiev team: 3 people

Total: 25 participants (15 women)

There is not much of a tradition of debating and public speaking in front of voters in the Kyrgyz Republic; consequently, candidates and their staffs do not typically prepare for such meetings. Therefore, the training was devised to introduce them to the concept of competitive debates, delivering a specific message, and staying on message.

The first part of the training emphasized the basic requirements of effective public speaking, and the equation for a successful public appearance: demonstrate you understand the concerns of voters (based on poll results) + show you are uniquely qualified to answer those concerns = political support. This is simple but profound for this society. Too often one part of the equation is overemphasized, leaving voters with just a list of problems or a biography of the candidate.

The second trainer talked about appearing on TV: the entertainment quality of TV; appearance; speaking simply; and use of humor or tragedy to make a connection with audience. He then showed participants clips of politicians speaking and asked them to judge who performed well and who did not.

In the debate segment of the training, the trainer stressed that the audience is more important than the opponent in terms of the candidate getting his/her message out. Also, the trainer deftly illustrated, by answering random questions on various issues, how to

stay on message. For the mock debate, the local journalist played the opponent, and the IRI country director was the moderator. The candidates fielded difficult questions from the moderator, opponent, and mock audience.

The voter grid (indicating voters' willingness to vote in general and vote for your candidate) introduced the theoretical approach to identifying the candidate's target segments of the electorate. For example, if a candidate knows that among Bishkek males 20-35 he is unpopular, then in his public speaking he can hit themes that these young men have identified as important to them in polls. However, in order to effectively use this tool, the candidate's team needs polling data and detailed cross-tabulations that show what the electorate (and which sectors of the electorate) thinks of the candidate.

Teamwork was emphasized in all components of the training. The candidate has to have his/her team ask the hard questions and do the research to be prepared for speaking and debating. This also applies to the candidate's trusted agents, if he/she wants to speak effectively on the candidate's behalf.

Unfortunately, only two candidates participated. One candidate refused to come because he said he did not have time and thought that IRI was arrogant in proposing the training to him. Another said he had enough experience talking in front of a TV. Another candidate's team could not come to the last session because they were tied up with the Central Election Commission in an argument over whether their candidate was a Kazakhstan citizen or not.

A certain segment of the training is predicated upon polling results being available. Polls are expensive, and not many candidates do them. With little polling data and the lack of concrete information, messages are not developed and candidates therefore are not distinguishable from one another in terms of their message. With no defined message, the candidate lacks a strategy for public speaking and debate. More importantly, the candidate surrenders any semblance of control over the unpredictable process of interacting with voters.

The participants realized how helpful the training was in teaching them the basic elements for effective public speaking and its strategic importance in a campaign. Participants who were skeptical at the start were nodding their head and engaging in the discussion and exercises by the middle of the training. Participant comments from training evaluation forms captured this sentiment:

- "I was able to understand the various facets of public speaking and can now use those parts that will be needed for our electorate."
- "I now know how to make an opponent unsure while being flexible myself."
- "Very constructive recommendations, good nuances, and we can now work on this in our staff, but I understand this is just the beginning and that I must know more."

- “The interactive way of instruction and the information we received will allow us to develop this kind of thinking in our campaign staff.”
- “I understand now how complicated debating is in real life and how many stumbling blocks and dangers there are. It’s clear you have to prepare a lot.”

Candidate Observer Training

To further the strategic objective for strengthening democratic culture among citizens (SO 2.1), encourage a more competitive political process (LLR 2.1.3.1), and generally contribute to an honest electoral process, IRI implemented an ambitious training program for candidate poll watchers: 645 candidate observers were trained in eight cities across the country.

The training took place two weeks prior to the July 10 election and consisted of two major efforts: one in the north and one in the south. IRI staff who had developed an expertise in candidate observer rights and responsibilities as stipulated in the election code conducted the training. The northern trip included Bishkek, Naryn, Tokmok, and Kochkor. The southern trip included Batken, Karakol, Uzgen, and Osh.

Training topics at all locations included:

- structure of election administration
- voter lists and checking voter ID
- counting the votes
- an orderly polling station
- role of observers on election day
- completing the polling station protocol
- mobile voting
- filing a complaint
- dealing with uncooperative election commissions
- key elements to control on election day.

Participants included individual, party-affiliated, and NGO-affiliated volunteers for candidates. Four OSCE long-term observers and USAID staff also attended several of the training sessions.

Candidate observers:

Umetalieva team: 2 people

Jeksheev team: 3 people

Bakir uulu team: 42 people

Bakiev team: 435 people

Party observers:

Ar Namys Party: 49 people

Total: 531 participants (255 women)

The goal of the training was to instruct candidate observers on their rights and responsibilities according to the election code. The training also clarified issues such as absentee balloting, mobile voting, and the selection of polling station officials.

The training was interactive and included group work, presentations, and discussions. A group of people with observation experience was drawn from the audience and then used as a resource to answer questions and to give new observers advice based on their own experience from other elections. The trainings were mainly conducted in Kyrgyz.

All participants received the Russian-Kyrgyz IFES manual for PEC members. The manual has a specific chapter for observers. Participants also received a copy of the election code in Kyrgyz or Russian. The training included an exercise in using the IFES manual.

As in the trainings for the parliamentary elections, participants were very active and showed great interest in receiving the training material and in discussing issues raised during the training. Most questions related to voter lists, external and internal migration, absentee voting, and voter ID.

Although turnout for the trainings was quite good, observers from the “government” candidate, in this case Bakiev, constituted 90% of the participants. In many cities, IRI trainers visited all candidate campaign headquarters the day before the training to ensure that they would send people to the training. Lack of resources and a nationwide organization on the part of many candidates meant they did not have people to send to the trainings.

The lack of competitiveness of this election compared to the parliamentary elections also meant that observers in many cases did not play as active a role and candidates did not mobilize observers in the same way as in previous elections.

Other activity

During the quarter, IRI’s resident country director and local staff attended several election coordination meetings with the OSCE, UNDP, the U.S. Ambassador, embassy and USAID staff, and other international and local democracy assistance organizations. IRI staff also continued to meet with political party leaders and political movement/bloc activists to keep each other mutually informed of developments and plans. Election-related meetings and events which IRI attended include:

- Overseas Advisory Security Council meeting (U.S. organizations and companies)
- UNDP Election Assistance coordination meetings
- A meeting of international organizations to discuss possible changes to the election code
- Four Rayon Election Commissions in Bishkek casting of lots for commission members (only eight parties participated)

- Civil Society Forum (several ministers, parliamentarians, and many other public leaders attended)
- U.S. embassy Democracy Commission meeting
- Temirbek Akmataliev, former Minister of Emergency Situations, leader of a new movement called Akikyat, and possible presidential candidate
- A meeting with a member of the SDPK working in the Kulov/Atambaev campaign headquarters with responsibility for voter lists, observer training, and outside country voting
- A meeting with Bulatov, the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society's activist in Kockhor
- Ar Namys party congress
- SDPK party congress
- A signing of a code of ethics by four presidential candidates; Bakiev was notably not there. The document was put together by a newly-formed party called Acidy or "Fairness," led by presidential candidate Dushebaev
- Elizabeth Little, IFES voter list consultant
- Tursanbai Bakir uulu, Kyrgyz Republic ombudsman, who complained of trouble opening regional campaign offices because of obstruction from Bakiev supporters
- Daniyar Ibraimov, IFES, Osh, coordinator of IFES's election commission trainings in the south
- Askat Dukenbaev, who is reviving a student union he started in the early 1990s. During the March events, he was the liaison between the youth organization Kel-Kel and parliamentarians
- OSCE-UNDP press event. IRI gave a short presentation on IRI's activities and handed out copies of the poll to media representatives and the NGO sector
- Ambassador Young and the international democracy NGO community
- UNDP and OSCE with the entire Kyrgyz CEC
- Several candidate-voter meetings
- Presidential candidate Aitikeev
- CEC Chairman Abdraimov

IRI Eurasia Deputy Director Robyn Saakian visited the Kyrgyz Republic this quarter. During the visit, RCD Lilley and Ms. Saakian met with presidential candidates Bakiev, Kulov, Atambaev, and Nazaraliev; the OSCE observation mission leader; a former presidential candidate; a leading advisor to Bakiev; USAID; and, the U.S. Embassy.

IRI Vice President Liz Dugan also visited the Kyrgyz Republic this quarter. Her trip coincided with the senatorial delegation which visited in late May. RCD Lilley and Ms. Dugan met with USAID's Cliff Brown and Jennifer Croft.

III. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Work Plan April – June 2005 Results and Indicators

Result 1: More issue-oriented platforms and campaign communications from presidential candidates.

Indicator: Campaign materials and candidate appearances address issues of concern revealed in the poll results. IRI will analyze campaign literature and statements, including debates and meetings with voters, to see if there is a connection. IRI will also seek out post-election exit polls and interviews that show whether voters say they voted for a candidate because of his platform or other reasons. IRI will also conduct informal post-election surveys of campaign staffs to learn their analysis of voters' motives.

Quarterly Performance for this Indicator: The message development training was based on the nationwide opinion poll IRI commissioned in April. In follow-up interviews, participants unanimously said the polling data was very helpful. All six presidential campaign staffs received copies of the poll, and during the campaign all candidates talked about unemployment, economic development, and corruption, which were the main issues for Kyrgyzstan voters according to the poll. The IRI office fulfilled about 20 requests for hard copies of the poll. Another 75 copies were distributed through the press service of the Kenesh to all the deputies.

Moya Strana member Kulsina Kachkinbaeva said: "As a political scientist, I give high estimation to the poll you have done. It was very timely and well done. Please continue this type of research work." Adil Turdukulov, a SDPK participant in the message development training, said that the poll results presentation helped everyone to better understand the political environment in the country. "Please do more polls like that. We need this for comparative analysis of the dynamically developing situation and to adequately react to it."

Campaign messages, literature, debates, and meetings

IRI either gave the poll data and/or training to five of the six presidential hopefuls. In terms of actual messages, all of the candidates produced campaign literature and agitation materials with a basic message that was related to issues brought up in the poll, whether it was the events of March 24, the need for security, economic development, tolerance and unity, or the need for a stronger fight against corruption. The campaign slogans were as follow:

Bakiev: "Our future is in unity and work"

Aitikeev: "Today Protection - Tomorrow Victory"

Umetalieva: "Today we can live better than yesterday, and tomorrow we can live better than today"

Dushebaev: "Stability and order"

Jeksheev: "Governance of the people for the people"

Bakir uulu: "Honest people – honest government"

Following the guidelines of the IRI training, campaign messages were short and for the most part based on reality, meaning they took into consideration the political support equation emphasized by the IRI trainer: the candidate understands the concerns and problems of voters + the candidate has unique qualities to address those concerns =

political support. Examples are Bakiev and the message of unity; Bakir uulu and the message of spiritual revival; and Aitikeev and the message of stability. These candidates were the top three choices of the voters.

These messages were carried to voters throughout the country, giving them the first real chance in the Kyrgyz Republic's short 15-year history to compare candidates. An unprecedented effort, funded and carried out largely by foreign donors and organizations, including IRI, distributed close to 1.5 million copies of newspapers with candidate platforms throughout the country.

The top three candidates – all of whom received the poll results and discussed their campaigns with IRI – also did a good job of targeting their electorate. Bakir uulu used focus groups to target religious voters. Aitikeev's program was mostly targeted at Russian speaking voters and touted his nickname as the "Kyrgyz Putin." Bakiev came across as the unifier, the man from the south who joined with his political rival from the north for the sake of the country's stability.

In terms of an unsuccessful message, Dushebaev's platform and message talked about stability and peace, but as the only candidate to appear in campaign materials in a law enforcement uniform, his image was problematic, especially given the fact that militia was powerless to protect citizens and their property during the March 24 looting. Dushebaev did not attend any of IRI's trainings because he was a late entry into the campaign.

In televised debates, candidates were asked to focus on a specific topic, such as nationalization of some sectors of the economy or a verdict on the events of March 24. But candidates stuck to their messages and presented voters with a clear choice. Dushebaev was singled out for his criticism of the March 24 events, calling them destabilizing, while Bakir uulu commented on the importance of the Koran as the basis for law, and Umetalieva talked of the important role of women in society.

Candidate meetings were more lively than in the past because the candidates presented different programs, but, unfortunately, these meetings also continue to be perfunctory and over-planned affairs for unwilling or uninterested audiences, like school teachers at the school. Most of the candidates failed to tailor their messages to the audience, instead tending to drone on too long about general promises.

Voter motives

An exit poll (conducted by local sociological research firms with USAID and European Government funding and assisted by IRI) showed that candidate messages played a significantly larger role in swaying voters during the presidential election. The exit poll showed that more than a quarter of all voters voted for a particular candidate because they felt that candidate's program reflected their beliefs. By contrast, IRI's poll in mid-April showed that just 12% of respondents considered political platforms as the most important determining factor in voting for a candidate. This number was doubled in the three months leading up to the election. The exit poll also indicated that close to 15% of voters voted for a particular candidate because that candidate's campaign materials

convinced them. Thus, the nationwide effort to disseminate campaign material succeeded in exposing more voters to campaign platforms.

The two results from the exit poll indicate that IRI's work to move campaigns in the Kyrgyz Republic away from traditional determining factors, such as a candidate's origin and ethnic background, and towards a focus on ideas, is bearing fruit.

Result 2. Increased campaigning skills of political parties, through a more competitive political process.

Indicators:

A. IRI local staff will directly observe some DTD campaigners to record their use and facility with DTD campaigning.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator A: IRI decided not to accompany DTD campaigners, believing that the presence of an international organization on these visits to voters could compromise the candidate and interfere in what should be a conversation between the campaigner and voter. IRI will informally survey the campaigns on their perception of the value of and facility with DTD campaigning in the next quarter.

B. Candidate's use of polling results in developing an effective campaign message.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator B: See Result 1 above.

Expected Result 3: Improved candidate observer skills.

Indicator: Under proposed supplemental funding for a four-oblast EOM, the EOM volunteers will monitor poll-watchers, in addition to their other observation responsibilities. Their evaluations, in addition to those of domestic candidate observers trained by IRI, will allow IRI to assess candidate observer performance. The baseline for measuring improvement will be candidate observer performance in the February 27 and March 13 parliamentary first- and second-round voting.

Quarterly Performance for this Indicator: To be reported in the next quarter.

Expected Result 4: More active political parties in election process.

Indicator: IRI will monitor the following political party activities: endorsement of candidates; observer and party activist work during the election period; and the issuing of public statements on issues. The baseline for measuring improvement will be the level of party support for party-affiliated and coalition-affiliated candidates in the 2004 local elections and the 2005 parliamentary election.

Quarterly Performance for this Indicator: Political parties were largely sidelined in the presidential election process. Only Ar Namys and SDPK worked actively for a candidate (Bakiev), and their contributions were dwarfed by the Bakiev campaign headquarters, which gathered individuals and supporters from around the country. The

Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan, which nominated Japar Jeksheev, is a weak and under-funded party that was not able to mount much of an effort in support of its candidate. Dushebaev's party, which was founded in April 2005, did not have time to organize in order to play a role in the campaign. One of the country's most organized parties, Moya Strana, was not even asked to assist in any campaign, much to its leaders' chagrin. Most analysts say this was due to the party being associated – through its leader – with the deposed Akaev regime.

The lack of party involvement in election underscores their weak position in a society that still prefers to nominate independent candidates.

With constitutional changes afoot that should strengthen the role of parties, IRI expects parties to be a more integral part of the electoral process in the future, most likely starting with parliamentary by-elections in 2006 that will add 30 party seats to the current single-mandate parliament.

Presidential Election Assistance Results and Indicators

Result 1: Presidential campaign volunteers exhibit improved DTD techniques following participation in IRI training sessions.

Indicators:

A. Parties send campaign volunteers to IRI training sessions and allow IRI observers to accompany DTD teams during their deployment.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator A: Two parties, Ar Namys and SDPK, sent a combined total of 91 volunteers to IRI's election observer training. The latter part of this indicator was eliminated when IRI decided not to directly monitor DTD teams in order not to distract the campaigners. IRI will informally survey the campaigns on their perception of the value of the DTD method in the next quarter.

B. IRI observers note DTD compliance with essential canvassing techniques addressed during IRI training sessions.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator B: This indicator was eliminated when IRI decided not to directly monitor DTD teams in order not to distract the campaigners.

C. Analysis of exit polling and other electoral data demonstrates higher voter turnout in those districts to which DTD teams deployed.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator C: DTD campaigning requires significant financial and human resources to be practical in the Kyrgyz Republic. While representatives from several candidates attended IRI's DTD trainings, only two candidates actually had the resources to implement this campaign technique: acting president Bakiev and presidential hopeful Baryktbasov, the latter subsequently failing the candidate registration requirements. Virtually all participants of DTD trainings were from these two candidates. Bakiev's campaign was the only one that used DTD on a

nationwide basis. This was a calculated strategy to avoid being accused of using administrative resources.

Other parts of this indicator will be reported in the next quarter.

Result 2: Candidates use more sophisticated public speaking and debate skills.

Indicators:

A. During debates and public speaking engagements, candidates employ strategies dealing with the substance of what they are going to say, such as attacking an opponent's weak spots or defending oneself.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator A: IRI has substituted the following as the chief indicator: Candidates pursue issue-based agendas, demonstrating an ability to articulate arguments.

Two candidates participated in the debate and public speaking training – Umetalieva and Ibragimova, the latter subsequently dropping out because the CEC determined she did not collect the necessary 50,000 signatures. All the candidates had a chance to appear publicly either on TV or in meetings with voters. See Result 1 above for a discussion of issue-based agendas.

The public speaking and debate training was effective because it introduced the “political support equation,” which Umetalieva used in her public appearances. This equation (focusing on problems of the voters and the qualities a candidate possesses to resolve them), while rather simple, has introduced a new way of communicating with voters. According to Ibragimova, “This approach was revolutionary for me because before I used to use logic to convince people of my positions [rather than focusing on issues that were important to them].”

Other participants said that during the campaign they used advice dispensed by the trainer, such as speaking simply and adjusting one's message depending on the audience. Yulduz Nasyrova, a trusted agent of Umetalieva, who was responsible for representing the candidate in the southern oblast of Jalal-abad, said she altered her speech depending on who she was talking to. “I had certain groups of voters to address, mostly women and youth. I picked out two or three problems and offered solutions. Also, I did some training for regional campaigners since they also had to talk to people. When I noticed that people did not understand everything I said, I stuck to only what I knew myself.”

One of Ibragimova's advisors said the campaign realized how faulty the advice of their local consultants was in comparison to IRI's training: “We saw how, both during and after the IRI training, our candidate opened up and became more confident in her appearance. I would say that our candidate improved her image precisely because of your training. I was also a spokesperson, so I can say that it was helpful for me, too. I liked the part when the candidate's speech was filmed, and everybody took part in critiquing it afterwards. In my personal meetings I also tried to focus on voters' concerns.”

Candidate Jeksheev's advisor Gulzar Asankanova said she called on skills learned during the training every time she had to speak on behalf of her candidate. "Before the meetings I went through the handouts I received at your training. It gave me extra confidence. Also, I liked the political support equation that Trygve [Olson] gave in his training."

The Bakiev camp used the training tips to educate their trusted agents and DTD campaigners. "We called it "public speaking tips." This allowed us to instruct campaigners before they started work. We also used knowledge about focus groups and chose candidate representatives selectively. That saved us time and human resources because we ended up sending people only to the places where it was worthwhile to work."

B. During debates and public speaking engagements, candidates use tips on appearance and speaking style, such as what to wear and how to speak.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator B: All the candidates dressed up appropriately for events. Umetalieva followed the advice of the IRI trainer and always appeared publicly in a traditional Kyrgyz coat. Bakiev opted for the informal look, appearing in his campaign literature without a tie. His campaign played popular music while he approached the stage, which was an unusual technique in the Kyrgyz Republic.

When on the road, some candidate advisors used the advice about considering which electorate they were talking to. In the south, Nasyrova, an advisor to Umetalieva, always dressed formally and conservatively in order to appear in line with local traditions.

Result 3: A fairer election process based in part on the presence of international election observers.

Indicators:

A. Poll workers perform in accordance with the election law under the presence of international observers.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator A: To be reported during the next quarter in IRI's Election Observation Mission Report.

B. Candidate observers report that the election was conducted in accordance with Kyrgyz Republic's election law.

Quarterly Performance for Indicator B: To be reported during the next quarter in IRI's Election Observation Mission Report.

NATIONAL OPINION SURVEY OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kyrgyzstan national opinion poll was conducted by IRI on April 15-25, 2005 using a representative sample of 1,500 Kyrgyz residents aged 18 years and older. The following conclusions can be drawn from the survey:

- After the March 2005 ouster of President Askar Akaev, the country's population remains divided over the dramatic change in political leadership that ensued. In general, people in the south of the country are more satisfied with the changes that took place while people in the north are more skeptical. Overall, a majority of Kyrgyz people oppose actions that can lead to unrest and social conflict. People value personal and societal security the most.
- The Kyrgyz population considers unemployment, economic development, and fighting corruption to be the most important issues in the country. Voters have very high expectations that the next president will be able to solve these problems.
- At the moment, there is a high level of political interest in society. Political parties are perceived in a rather positive light and are considered to be a necessary element of the political system. People were disappointed with the last parliamentary elections because they were generally perceived to be unfair. At the same time, Kyrgyz people have very high expectations that the forthcoming presidential elections will be free and fair.
- The population trusts two Kyrgyz politicians the most: F. Kulov, who is most popular in the north of the country, and K. Bakiev, who gets the highest ratings in the south.
- On the international scene, Russia is perceived as the country's main partner, while China is seen as the most likely threat.
- The poll results show that Kyrgyz society is very tolerant of religious and ethnic minorities, and there seem to be no objective factors that could lead to ethnic or religious conflicts.
- In general, all social groups in Kyrgyzstan express similar opinions about the political situation and the future of the country. The most significant differences in opinions occur between people living in the more prosperous north and poorer south. Thus, standard of living, urban-rural division, and self-identification as northerner or southerner (to some extent related to family networks or clan ties), are the main discriminating factors in determining political preferences.

MAIN RESULTS OF THE POLL

1. THE GENERAL SITUATION

1.1. The population is split when evaluating the country's current development: 45% of those interviewed say the country is on the right track, while 47% think the country is headed in the wrong direction. People in the south are most satisfied, while people in the north are the least satisfied. Ethnic Uzbeks, who mostly live in the south, are most positive; Russians residing in the north are most negative; while the Kyrgyz themselves are divided.

1.2. 53% of Kyrgyzstan residents are satisfied with the way democracy is developing in their country, while 43% are dissatisfied. In terms of ethnic groups, the population's attitude towards democracy mirrors their assessment of the country's development: ethnic Uzbeks are most positive about democracy at the moment (64% satisfied), while Russians are least satisfied (36%). Kyrgyz are slightly more often satisfied (56%) than not (40%). Osh residents differ in their opinions about democracy from the other regions: 72% are satisfied and 25% are not. Bishkek residents are most pessimistic, with 41% satisfied and 57% not.

1.3. According to the poll, the financial situation of Kyrgyz households showed little change over the past year: 53% saw no changes, while 22% noted improvement, and 24% a decline. Residents of Talas and Osh regions are the most positive, while the residents of Jalal-Abad are least positive. People's financial position is significant because attitudes towards economic development are usually strongly related to people's evaluation of the direction the country is headed in. For example, if people consider their personal financial situation to be improving, most often they say the country's development is going in the right direction. However, in Kyrgyzstan's current context, where more people think the country is headed in the wrong direction, it is clear that political motives are influencing voter attitudes more than economic factors.

1.4. The Kyrgyz population is mostly worried about social problems:

1.4.1. On a nation-wide level, the main problems are unemployment (mentioned by 47% of respondents), economic development (26%), and corruption (24%). Other areas that worry people are the agricultural sector (9%), the situation (jobs) of young people (8%), weak social safety net (7%), and poverty (6%). Unemployment is especially emphasized in Issyk-Kul, Batken, and Talas regions.

1.4.2. On the community level, unemployment / jobs (44%), poverty (31%), standard of living (16%), problems with drinking water (15%), housing problems (8%), water supply (7%), and electricity (6%) are mentioned most often. Poverty is especially emphasized in Naryn and Batken regions; housing

in Bishkek; water quality and supply in Issyk-Kul, Osh, and Batken; and the level of crime in Bishkek.

1.4.3. On the household level, people stress financial and social issues: low income (40%), unemployment (33%), housing problems (20%), low pensions and benefits (14%), water supply (14%), costs of healthcare (12%), expensive utilities (9%), and expensive education (8%). Jobs are stressed by dwellers of Naryn, Jalal-Abad, and Batken most often; housing by Bishkek residents; healthcare by Naryn and Batken residents; and expensive utilities by Bishkek residents.

2. POLITICS

2.1. Kyrgyzstan voters give preference to the following attributes for a presidential candidate: strong personality, previous work record, education, political program, and moral qualities. Nationality is more important for Jalal-Abad residents than for residents of other regions. When thinking about the type of political leader they desire, a majority of interviewees prefer a strong, fearless, and just figure, who can defend the unity of the country (for example, respondents most often chose the historical figure of Manas).

2.2. In regard to the change of political leadership in March, the population is split: 52% are positive, 17% neutral, and 31% negative. Most negative are Batken residents; most positive are Naryn and Talas respondents.

2.3. Opinions about the seizure of the “White house” are also split: 54% of those interviewed viewed it as negative, and 12% as neutral, while 34% are positive about it. People in the north are most negative, while southerners are somewhat more positive.

2.4. The Kyrgyz favor peaceful and legal forms of social protest, such as legal strikes, demonstrations, and signing petitions. Such forms seem acceptable to over 70% of the residents. At the same time, only a minority supports more aggressive forms of social protest, such as demonstrations without permission, strikes without permission, and occupation of buildings. These actions seem acceptable to 10-13% of the population.

2.5. A majority of the population (69%) thinks that political parties are important to Kyrgyzstan’s future because they lead to progress, work for the people, and ensure political pluralism. Those who think that political parties are not important usually do not trust the parties and are themselves not interested in politics.

2.6. More than half (53%) of those interviewed support electing people to parliament from party lists, and an overall majority (79%) believes that Kyrgyzstan needs an active opposition.

2.7. F. Kulov is the most popular political leader in the country: 91% of those interviewed have a favorable opinion about him. In a related open-ended question, 33% named him as the politician they trust most. At the time of the

survey, F. Kulov also led among possible presidential candidates, receiving 41% of the possible vote.

2.8. Acting president K. Bakiev occupied second place among Kyrgyz politicians. 79% of those interviewed had a positive opinion about him, while 28% trusted him most of all. Finally, 33% said they would vote for him in the election.

2.9. F. Kulov is most popular in the north of the country, while K. Bakiev is most popular in the south.

3. ELECTIONS

3.1. 87% of those interviewed said they are definitely going to vote in the next presidential election. Thus, the turnout might be higher than usual, but it depends on many factors, such as who is running (still unknown at the time of poll), internal political developments, and the situation in neighboring countries. Two main reasons for voting are: “it is my duty” (which is the prevailing motive in ex-Soviet countries) and interest in a particular candidate (which indicates a relatively high interest in politics at the moment).

3.2. An overall majority (76%) think that the last parliamentary elections were unfair. People living in the south of the country have a slightly more positive opinion about the recent elections than people in the north. The expectations for the presidential election are very high: 73% of those interviewed believe that these election will be fair. These hopes are especially high in the south.

3.3. 39% of the interviewees consider vote buying to be an acceptable practice for the next election, and 43% says that they would accept gifts from a candidate.

4. GOVERNMENT

4.1. The attitude towards the previous administration under A. Akaev shows some division in opinions. When asked about the achievements of the previous administration, respondents name many things, including democratic advances such as freedom of speech and religion; establishment of international relations; land reform; introduction of the national currency; education reform; and achievement of independence. People from the south stress freedom of speech and religion and land reform more often, while northerners emphasize the establishment of international relations and stability as important achievements of the previous administration. Young people and wealthier citizens value improvements in the quality of education.

4.2. According to respondents, the biggest failures of previous administration are corruption and abuse of power and trust.

4.3. The next president of Kyrgyzstan faces the difficult task of fulfilling his people's high expectations: when asked what are the priority issues the new president should attend to, respondents named, respectively: creating jobs and reducing unemployment (35%), reviving the economy (31%), and fighting corruption (21%). The population did not differentiate between the responsibilities of the president, parliament, government, and local authorities; thus, all problems are assigned to president as the highest authority in the land, and there is an expectation that he must solve them.

5. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

5.1. Russia is perceived as the most important partner for Kyrgyzstan (84%). Kazakhstan comes in a distant second (5%). The major political and economic threat is perceived to be China (35%), with the USA second (17%), followed by Uzbekistan (8%), and Tajikistan (7%). There are no significant differences between various social groups in regard to the evaluation of the possible threat from the USA; however, in terms of regional differences, residents of Osh registered the highest level of fear of America (30%).

5.2. All groups in the Kyrgyz society perceive Russia as the country's main partner in the future.

6. RELIGION AND CULTURE

6.1. In general, respondents think that there is a low-to-moderate risk of religious extremism in the country. Significantly, the level of religious and ethnic tolerance is high (81% consider a heterogeneous society to be a good thing).

6.2. 68% of those interviewed support Kyrgyz language priority over Russian language. Ethnic Kyrgyz (81%) and Uzbeks (63%) support this idea most, while Russians oppose it (72%).

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

7.1. TV is the most important source of political information for the Kyrgyz population. Direct contacts and meetings with politicians, as well as the opinion of respected people also play very important roles in the communication of political ideas.